

DRAKE

AN ENGLISH EPIC

BOOKS I.-III.

BY

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MCMVI

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*It is the Author's hope to complete this
Poem in twelve Books. But each part, as it
is published, will be complete in itself.*

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TO

RUDOLPH CHAMBERS LEHMANN.

D R A K E.

EXORDIUM.

WHEN on the highest ridge of that strange
land,
Under the cloudless blinding tropic blue,
Drake and his band of swarthy seamen stood
With dazed eyes gazing round them, emerald
fans
Of palm that fell like fountains over cliffs
Of gorgeous red anana bloom obscured
Their sight on every side. Illustrious gleams
Of rose and green and gold streamed from
the plumes

That flashed like living rainbows through the
glades.

Piratic glints of musketoon and sword,
The scarlet scarves around the tawny throats,
The bright brass ear-rings in the sun-black
ears,

And the calm faces of the negro guides
Opposed their barbarous bravery to the noon;
Yet a deep silence dreadfully besieged
Even those mighty hearts upon the verge
Of the undiscovered world. Behind them lay
The old earth ~~they~~ knew. In front they
could not see

What lay beyond the ridge. Only ~~they~~
heard

Cries of the painted birds troubling the heat
And shivering through the woods; till Francis
Drake

Plunged through the hush, took hold upon
a tree,

The tallest near them, and clomb upward,
branch

By branch.

And lo, as he swung clear above
The steep-down forest, on his wondering eyes
Mile upon mile of rugged shimmering gold
Burst the unknown immeasurable sea.
Then he descended; and with a new voice
Vowed that, God helping, he would one day
plough

Those virgin waters with an English keel.

So here, before the unattempted task,
Above the Golden Ocean of my dream
I clomb and saw in splendid pageant pass
The wild adventures and heroic deeds
Of England's epic age, a vision lit
With mighty prophecies, fraught with a doom
Worthy the great Homeric roll of song,
Yet all unsung and unrecorded quite

By those who might have touched with
Raphael's hand

The large imperial legend of our race,
Ere it brought forth the braggarts of an
hour,

Self-worshippers who love their imaged
strength,

And as a symbol for their own proud selves
Misuse the sacred name of this dear land,
While England to the Empire of her soul
Like some great Prophet passes through the
crowd

That cannot understand; for he must climb
Up to that sovran thunder-smitten peak
Where he shall grave and trench on adamant
The Law that God shall utter by the still
Small voice, not by the whirlwind or the fire.
There labouring for the Highest in himself
He shall achieve the good of all mankind;
And from that lonely Sinai shall return

Triumphant o'er the little gods of gold
That rule their little hour upon the plain.
Oh, thou blind master of these opened eyes
Be near me, therefore, now; for not in pride
I lift lame hands to this imperious theme;
But yearning to a power above mine own
Even as a man might lift his hands in
• prayer.

Or as a child, perchance, in those dark days
When London lay beleaguered and the axe
Flashed out for Rome in England; and the
blood

Of martyrs made a purple path for Spain
Up to the throne of Mary; as a child
, Gathering with friends upon a winter's morn
For some mock fight between the hateful
prince •

Philip and Thomas Wyatt, all at once
Might see in gorgeous ruffs embastioned
Popinjay plumes and slouching hats of Spain,

Gay shimmering silks and rich encrusted
 gems,

Gold collars, rare brocades, and sleek trunk-
 hose

The Ambassador and peacock courtiers come
Strutting along the white snow-strangled
 street,

A walking plot of scarlet Spanish flowers, -
And with one cry a hundred boyish hands
Put them to flight with snowballs, while the
 wind

All round their Spanish ears hissed like a
 flight

Of white-winged geese; so may I wage per-
 chance

A mimic war with all my heart in it,
Munitioned with mere perishable snow,
Which mightier hands one day will urge
 with steel.

Yet may they still remember me as I

Remember, with one little laugh of love,
That child's game, this were wealth enough
for me.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my
prayer;

Help me that I may tell the enduring tale
Of that great sea-man, good at need, who
first

Sailed round this globe and made one little
isle,

One little isle against that huge Empire
Of Spain whose might was paramount on
earth,

O'ertopping Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, and
Rome,

Carthage and all huge Empires of the past,
He made this little isle, against the world,
Queen of the earth and sea. Nor this alone
The theme; for, in a mightier strife engaged

Even than he knew, he fought for the new
faiths,

Championing our manhood as it rose
And cast its feudal chains before the seat
Of kings; nay, in a mightier battle yet
He fought for the soul's freedom, fought the
fight

Which, though it still rings in our wonder-
ing ears,

Was won then and for ever—that great
war,

That last Crusade of Christ against His
priests,

Wherein Rome fell behind a thunderous roar
Of ocean triumph over burning ships
And shattered fleets, while England, Eng-
land rose,

Her white cliffs laughing out across the
waves,

Victorious over all her enemies.

And while he won the world for her domain,
Her loins brought forth, her fostering bosom
fed

Souls that have swept the spiritual seas
From heaven to hell, and justified her crown.
For round the throne of great Elizabeth
Verulam, Burleigh, Sidney, Spenser, More,
Clustered like stars, rare Jonson like the
crown

Of Cassiopeia, Marlowe ruddy as Mars,
And over all those mighty hearts arose
The soul of Shakespeare brooding far and
wide

Beyond our small horizons, like a light
Thrown from a vaster sun that still illumines
Tracts which the arc of our increasing day
Must still leave undiscovered, unexplored.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my
prayer,

*As thou didst touch the heart and light the
flame*

Of wonder in those eyes which first awoke
To beauty and the sea's adventurous dream
Three hundred years ago, three hundred
years,

And five long decades, in the leafy lanes
Of Devon, where the tallest trees that bore
The raven's matted nest had yielded up
Their booty, while the perilous branches
swayed

Beneath the boyish privateer, the king
Of many young companions, Francis Drake;
So hear me and so help, for more than his
My need is, even than when he first set sail
Upon that wild adventure with three ships
And three-score men from grey old Plymouth
Sound,

Not knowing if he went to life or death,
Nor caring greatly, so that he were true

To his own sleepless and unfaltering soul
Which could not choose but hear the ring-
ing call

Across the splendours of the Spanish Main
From ever fading, ever new horizons,
And shores beyond the sunset and the sea.

Mother and sweetheart, England; from whose
breast,

With all the world before them, they went
forth,

Thy seamen, o'er the wide uncharted waste,
Wider than that Ulysses roamed of old,
Even as the wine-dark Mediterranean
Is wider than some tide-relinquished pool
Among its rocks, yet none the less explored
To greater ends than all the pride of Greece
And pomp of Rome achieved; if my poor
song

Now spread too wide a sail, forgive thy son

And lover, for thy love was ever wont
To lift men up in pride above themselves
To do great deeds which of themselves alone
They could not; thou hast led the unfalter-
ing feet
Of even thy meanest heroes down to death,
Lifted poor knights to many a great emprise,
Taught them high thoughts, and though they
kept their souls
Lowly as little children, bidden them lift
Eyes unappalled by all the myriad stars
That wheel around the great white throne of
God.

BOOK I.

Now through the great doors of the Council-
• room

Magnificently streamed in rich array
The peers of England, regal of aspect
And grave. Their silence waited for the
Queen :

And even now she came ; and through their
midst,

Low as they bowed, she passed without a
smile

And took her royal seat. A bodeful hush
Of huge anticipation gripped all hearts,
Compressed all brows, and loaded the broad
noon

With gathering thunder: none knew what
the hour

Might yet bring forth; but the dark fire of
war

Smouldered in every eye; for every day
The Council met debating how to join
Honour with peace, and every day new tales
Of English wrongs received from the red
hands

Of that gigantic Empire, insolent
Spain, spurred fiercer resentments up like
steeds

Revolting, on the curb, foaming for battle,
In all men's minds, against whatever odds.
On one side of the throne great Walsingham,
A lion of England, couchant, watchful, calm,
Was now the master of opinion: all
Drew to him. Even the hunchback Burleigh
smiled

With half-ironic admiration now,

As in the presence of the Queen they met
Amid the sweeping splendours of her court,
A cynic smile that seemed to say, "I, too,
Would fain regain that forthright heart of
fire;

Yet statesmanship[.] is but a smother name
For the superior cunning which ensures
Victory." And the Queen, too, knowing her
strength

And weakness, though her woman's heart
leaped out

To courage, yet with woman's craft preferred
The subtler strength of Burleigh; for she
knew

• Mary of Scotland waited for that war

• To strike her in the side for Rome; she
knew •

How many thousands lurked in England still
Remembering Rome and bloody Mary's reign.
France o'er a wall of bleeding Huguenots

Watched for an hour to strike. Against all
these

What shield could England raise, this little
isle,—

Out-matched, outnumbered, perilously near
Utter destruction?

So the long debate
Proceeded.

All at once there came a cry
Along the streets and at the palace-gates
And at the great doors of the Council-room!
Then through the pikes and halberds a voice
rose

Imperative for entrance, and the guards
Made way, and a strange whisper surged
around,

And through the peers of England thrilled the
blood

Of Agincourt as to the foot of the throne
Came Leicester, for behind him as he came

A seaman stumbled, travel-stained and torn,
Crying for justice, and gasped out his tale.
“The Spaniards,” he moaned, “the Inquisition!

They have taken all my comrades, all our
crew,

And flung them into dungeons: there they lie
Waiting for England, waiting for their Queen!

Will you not free them? I alone am left!

All London is afire with it, for this

Was one of your chief city merchant’s
ships—

The *Pride of London*, one of Osborne’s ships!

But there is none to help them! I escaped

With shrieks of torment ringing in these
ears,

The glare of torture-chambers in these eyes

That see no faces anywhere but blind

Blind faces, each a bruise of white that
smiles

In idiot agony, washed with sweat and blood,
The face of some strange thing that once
was man,

And now can only turn from side to side
Babbling like a child, with mouth agape,
And crying for help where there is none to
hear

Save those black vizards in the furnace-glow,
Moving like devils at their hellish trade. . . .”
He paused; his memory sickened, his brain
swooned

Back into that wild glare of obscene pain!
Once more to his ears and nostrils horribly
crept

The hiss and smell of shrivelling human flesh!
His dumb stare told the rest: his head sank
down;

He bowed; he fell; he strove in agony
With what all hideous words must leave
untold;

While Leicester vouched him, "This man's
tale is true!"

But like a gathering storm a windy moan
Of passion, like a tiger's, slowly crept
From the grey lips of Walsingham. "My
Queen,
Will you not free them?"

• Then Elizabeth,
Whose name is one for ever with the name
Of England, rose; and in her face the gleam
Of justice that makes anger terrible
Shone, and she stretched her glittering sceptre
forth •

And spoke, with distant empires in her eyes.

"My lords, this is the last cry they shall wring
From English lips unheeded: we will have
Such remedies for this as all the world
Shall tremble at!"

And, on that night, while Drake

Close in his London lodging lay concealed
Until he knew if it were peace or war
With Spain (for he had struck on the high
seas

At Spain; and well he knew if it were
peace

His blood would be made witness to that
bond,

And he must die a pirate's death or fly
Westward once more), there all alone, he
pored

By a struggling rushlight o'er a well-thumbed
chart

Of magic islands in the enchanted seas,
Dreaming, as boys and poets only dream
With those that see God's wonders in the
deep,

/ Perilous visions of those palmy keys,
Cocoa-nut islands, parrot-haunted woods,
Crisp coral reefs and blue shark-finned lagoons

Fringed with the creaming foam, mile upon
mile

Of mystery. Dream after dream went by,
Colouring the brown air of that London
night

With many a mad miraculous romance.

There, suddenly, some augury, some flash
Showed him a coming promise, a strange
hint,

Which, though he played with it, he scarce
believed;

Strange as in some dark cave the first fierce
gleam

Of pirate gold to some forlorn maroon

Who tiptoes to the heap and glances round
Askance, and dreads to hear what erst he
longed

To hear—some voice to break the hush; but
bathes

Both hands with childish laughter in the gold,

And lets it trickle through his fevered palms,
And begins counting half a hundred times
And loses count each time for sheer delight
And wonder in it; meantime, if he knew,
Passing the cave-mouth, far away, beyond
The still lagoon, the coral reef, the foam
And the white fluttering chatter of the birds,
A sail that might have saved him comes and
goes

Unseen across the blue Pacific sea.

So Drake, too, played with fancies; but that
sail

Passed not unseen, for suddenly ~~there~~ came
A firm and heavy footstep to the door,
Then a loud knocking; and, at first, he
thought

“I am a dead man: there is peace with
Spain,

And they are come to lead me to my doom.”
But, as he looked across one shoulder, pride

Checking the fuller watch for what he feared,
The door opened ; and cold as from the sea
The night rushed in, and there against the
gloom,

Clad, as it seemed, with wind and cloud
and rain, :

There loomed a stately form and high grim
face

Loaded with deadly thoughts of iron war—
Walsingham,—in one hand he held a map
Marked with red lines ; the other hand held
down

The rich, encrusted hilt of his great sword.

Then Drake rose, and the other cautiously

•Closing the door drew near the flickering
light,

And spread his map out on the table, saying—

“Mark for me here the points whereat the

King

Philip of Spain may best be wounded, mark

The joints of his harness;" and Drake looked
at him

Thinking, "If he betray me, I am dead."

But the soldier met his eyes and, with a
laugh,

Drake, quivering like a bloodhound in the
leash,

Stooped, with his finger pointing thus and
thus—

"Here would I guard, here would I lie in
wait,

Here would I strike him through the breast
and throat."

And as he spoke he kindled, and began
To set forth his great dreams, and high
romance

Rose like a moon reflecting the true sun
Unseen; and as the full round moon indeed
Rising behind a mighty mountain-chain
Will shadow forth in outline grim and black

Its vast and ragged edges, so that moon
Of high romance rose greatly shadowing
forth

The grandeur of his dreams, until their might
Dawned upon Walsingham, and he, too, saw
For a moment of muffled moonlight and wild
cloud.

The vision of the imperious years to be!
But suddenly Drake paused as one who
strays

Beyond the bounds of caution, paused and
cursed

His tongue for prating like a moon-struck
boy's.

• "I am mad," he cried, "I am mad to
babble so!"

Then Walsingham drew near him with strange
eyes

And muttered slowly, "Write that madness
down;

Ay, write it down, that madman's plan of
thine;

Sign it, and let me take it to the Queen."

But the weather-wiser seaman warily

Answered him, "If it please Almighty God

To take away our Queen Elizabeth,

Seeing that she is mortal as ourselves,

England might then be leagued with Spain,
and I

Should here have sealed my doom. I will
not put

My pen to paper."

So, across the charts,

With that dim light on each grim countenance

The seaman and the courtier subtly fenced •

With words and thoughts, but neither would
betray •

His whole heart to the other. At the last

Walsingham gripped the hand of Francis
Drake

And left him wondering.

On the third night came
A messenger from Walsingham who bade
Drake to the Palace where, without one
word,

The statesman met him in an anteroom
And led him, with flushed cheek and beating
heart,

Along a mighty gold-gloomed corridor
Into a high-arched chamber, hung with tall
Curtains of gold-fringed silk and tapestries
From Flanders looms, whereon were flowers
and beasts

And forest-work, great knights, with hawk
on hand,

Riding for ever on their glimmering steeds
Through bowery glades to some immortal
face

Beyond the fairy fringes of the world.
A silver lamp swung softly overhead,

Fed with some perfumed oil that shed abroad
Delicious light and fragrances as rare
As those that stirred faint wings at eventide
Through the King's House in Lebanon of
old.

Into a quietness as of fallen bloom
Their feet sank in that chamber; and, all
round,

Soft hills of Moorish cushions dimly drowsed
On glimmering crimson couches. Near the
lamp

An ebony chess-board stood inlaid with
squares

Of ruby and emerald, garnished with cinque-
foils

Of silver, bears and ragged staves: the men,
Likewise of precious stones, were all arrayed—
Bishops and knights and elephants and
pawns—

As for a game. Sixteen of them were set

In silver white, the other sixteen gilt.

Now, as Drake gazed upon an arras, nigh

The farther doors, whereon was richly wrought

The picture of that grave and lovely queen

Penelope, with cold hands weaving still

The unending web, while in an outer court

The broad-limbed wooers basking in the sun

On purple fleeces took from white-armed
girls,

Up-kirtled to the knee, the crimson wine;

There, as he gazed and thought, "Is this
not like

Our Queen Elizabeth who waits and weaves,

Penelope of England, her dark web

Unendingly till England's Empire come;"

There, as he gazed, for a moment, he could
vow

The pictured arras moved. Well had it been

Had he drawn sword and pierced it through
and through;

But he suspected nothing and said nought
To Walsingham; for thereupon they heard
The sound of a low lute and a sweet voice
Carolling like a gold-caged nightingale,
Caught by the fowlers ere he found his
mate,

And singing all his heart out evermore
To the unknown forest-love he ne'er should
see.

And Walsingham smiled sadly to himself,
Knowing the weary queen had bidden some
maid

Sing to her, even as David sang to Saul;
Since all her heart was bitter with her love
Or so it was breathed (and there the chess-
board stood, " "

Her love's device upon it), though she still,
For England's sake, must keep great foreign
kings

Her suitors, wedding no man till she died.

Nor did she know how, in her happiest hour
Remembered now most sorrowfully, the moon,
Vicegerent of the sky, through summer dews,
As that sweet ballad tells in plaintive rhyme,
Silvering the grey, old Cumnor towers and all
The hollow haunted oaks that grew thereby,
Gleamed on a casement whence the pure
 . white face

Of Amy Robsart, wife of Leicester, wife
Unknown of the Queen's lover, a frail bar
To that proud Earl's ambition, quietly gazed
And heard the night-owl hoot a dark presage
Of murder through her timid shuddering heart.
But of that deed Elizabeth knew nought;
Nay, white as Amy Robsart in her dream
Of love she listened to the sobbing lute,
Bitterly happy, proudly desolate;
So heavy are all earth's crowns and sharp
 with thorns!
But tenderly that high-born maiden sang.

SONG.

*Now the purple night is past,
Now the moon more faintly glows,
Dawn has through thy casement cast
Roses on thy breast, a rose,
Now the kisses are all done,
Now the world awakes anew,
Now the charmed hour is gone,
Let not love go, too.*

*When old winter, creeping night,
Sprinkles raven hair with white,
Dims the brightly glancing eye,
Laughs away the dancing light,
Roses may forget their sun,
Lilies may forget their dew,
Beauties perish, one by one,
Let not love go, too.*

*Palaces and towers of pride
Crumble year by year away ;
Creeds like robes are laid aside,
Even our very tombs decay !
When the all-conquering moth and rust
Gnaw the goodly garment through,
When the dust returns to dust,
Let not love go, too.*

*Kingdoms melt away like snow,
Gods are spent like wasting flames,
Hardly the new peoples know
Their divine thrice-worshipped names !
At the last great hour of all,
When Thou makest all things new,
Father, hear Thy children call,
Let not love go, too.*

The song ceased : all was still ; and now it
seemed

Power brooded on the silence, and Drake
saw

A woman come to meet him,—tall and pale
And proud she seemed: behind her head two
wings

As of some mighty phantom butterfly
Glimmered with jewel-sparks in the gold
gloom.

Her small, pure, grey-eyed face above her
ruff

Was chiselled like an agate; and he knew
It was the Queen. Low bent he o'er her
hand;

And "Ah," she said, "Sir Francis Wal-
singham

Hath told me what an English heart beats
here!

Know you what injuries the King of Spain
Hath done us?" Drake looked up at her:
she smiled,

“We find you apt! Will you not be our knight?

For we are helpless” — witchingly she smiled—

“We are not ripe for war; our policy
Must still be to uphold the velvet cloak
Of peace; but I would have it mask the hand
That holds the dagger! Will you not unfold
Your scheme to us?” And then with a low
bow

Walsingham, at a signal from the Queen,
Withdrew; and she looked down at Drake
and smiled;

And in his great simplicity the man
Spoke all his heart out like some youthful
knight

Before his Gloriana: his heart burned,
Knowing he talked with England, face to
face;

And suddenly the Queen bent down to him,

England bent down to him, and his heart
reeled

With the beauty of her presence—for indeed
Women alone have royal power like this
Within their very selves enthroned and
shrined

To draw men's hearts out! Royal she bent
down

And touched his hand for a moment.

“Friend,” she said,

Looking into his face with subtle eyes,

“I have searched thy soul to-night and
know full well

How I can trust thee! Canst thou think
that I,

The daughter of my royal father, lack

The fire which every boor in England feels

Burning within him as the bloody score

Which Spain writes on the flesh of English-
men

Mounts higher day by day? Am I not
Tudor?

I am not deaf or blind; nor yet a king!

I am a woman and a queen, and where
Kings would have plunged into their red
revenge

Or set their throne up on this temporal shore,
As flatterers bade that wiser king Canúte,
Thence to command the advancing tides of
battle

Till one ensanguined sea overwhelm throne and
king

And kingdom; friend, I take my woman's
way,

Smile in mine enemies' faces with a heart
All hell, and undermine them hour by hour!
This island scarce can fend herself from
France,

And now Spain holds the keys of all the
world,

How should we fight her, save that my poor
wit

Hath won the key to Philip? Oh, I know
His treacherous lecherous heart, and hour
by hour

My nets are drawing round him. I, that
starve

My public armies, feed his private foes, .
Nourish his rebels in the Netherlands,
Nay, sacrifice mine own poor woman's heart
To keep him mine—there is no sacrifice
On earth like this—and surely now stands
Fate

With hand uplifted by the doors of Spain
Ready to knock: the time is close at hand
When I shall strike, once, and no second
stroke.

Remember, friend, though kings have fought
for her,

This England, with the trident in her grasp,

Was ever woman; and she waits her throne;
And thou canst speed it. Furnish thee with
ships

Gather thy gentleman adventurers,
And be assured thy parsimonious queen—
‘Tis she knows that chattering of the
world—

With thee wealth enough. Then put
to sea,

Fly the black flag of piracy awhile
Against these blackest foes of all mankind.

Not what hast thou to do with piracy?

Fiestis humani generis indeed

Is Spain: she dwells beyond the bounds of
law;

Thine is no piracy, whate’er men say,

Thou art a knight on Gloriana’s quest.

Oh, lay that golden unction to thy soul,

This is no piracy, but glorious war,

Waged for thy country and for all mankind

Therefore put out to sea without one fear,
Ransack their El Dorados of the West,
Pillage their golden galleons, sap their
strength

Even at its utmost fountains; let them know
That there is blood, not water, in our veins.
Carry thy scheme out to the glorious end,
And, though at first thou needs must ride
alone

And unsupported, ere that end is reached,
When I shall give the word, nay, but one
word,

All England shall be up and after thee,
The sword of England shall shine over thee,
And round about thee like a guardian fire; "
All the great soul of England shall be there;
Her mighty dead shall at that cry of doom
Rise from their graves and in God's panoply
Plunge with our standards through immortal
storms

When Drake rides out across the wreck of
Rome.

As yet we must be cautious; let no breath
Escape thee, save to thy most trusted
friends;

For now, if my lord Burleigh heard one
word

Of all thou hast in mind, he is so much
The friend of caution and the beaten road,
He would not rest till he had wrecked thy
hopes

And sealed thy doom! Go now, fit out thy
ships.

Walsingham is empowered to give thee gold
Immediately, but look to him for more
As thou shalt need it, gold and gold to
spare,

My golden-hearted pilot to the shores
Of Empire—so farewell;" and through the
gloom

She vanished as she came; and Drake
groped, dazed,
Out through the doors, and found great
Walsingham
Awaiting him with gold.

But in the room
Where Drake had held his converse with
the Queen
The embroidered arras moved, and a lean
face,
White with its long eavesdropping upon
death,
Crept out and peered as a venomous adder
peers
From out dark ferns, then as the reptile
flashes

Along a path between two banks of flowers
Almost too swift for sight, a stealthy form
—One of the fifty spies whom Burleigh paid—
Passed down the gold-gloomed corridor to seek

His master, whom among great books he
found,

Calm, like a mountain brooding o'er the sea.
Nor did he break that calm for all these
winds

Of rumour that now burst from out the sky.
His brow bent like a cliff over his thoughts,
And the spy watched him half resentfully,
Thinking his news well worth a blacker
frown.

At last the statesman smiled and answered,
"Go;

Fetch Thomas Doughty, Leicester's secretary."

Few suns had risen and set ere Francis
Drake

Had furnished forth his ships with guns and
men,

Tried seamen that he knew in storms of
old,—

Will Harvest, who could haul the ropes and
fight

All day, and sing a foc'sle song to cheer
Sea-weary hearts at night; brave old Tom
Moone

The carpenter, whose faithful soul looked up
To Drake's large mastery with a mastiff's
eyes;

And three-score trusty mariners, all scarred
And weather-beaten. After these there came
Some two-score gentleman adventurers,
Gay college lads or lawyers that had grown
Sick of the dusty Temple, and were fired
With tales of the rich Indies and those tall
Enchanted galleons drifting through the West,
Laden with ingots and broad bars of gold.
Already some had bought at a great price
Green birds of Guatemala, which they wore
On their slouched hats, tasting the high
romance

And new-found colours of the world like wine.
By night they gathered in a marvellous inn
Beside the black and secret flowing Thames;
And joyously they tossed the magic phrase
"Pieces of eight," from mouth to mouth,
and laughed

And held the red wine up, night after night,
Around their tables, toasting Francis Drake.
Among these came a courtier, and none knew
Or asked by whose approval, for each thought
Some other brought him; yet he made his way
Cautiously, being a man with a smooth
tongue,

The secretary of Leicester; and his name
Was Thomas Doughty. Most of all with
Drake

He won his way to friendship, till at last
There seemed one heart between them and
one soul.

BOOK II.

So on a misty grey December morn
Five ships put out from calm old Plymouth
Sound;

Five little ships, the largest not so large
As many a coasting yacht or fishing-trawl
To-day; yet these must brave uncharted seas
Of unimagined terrors, haunted glooms,
And shadowy horrors of an unknown world
Wild as primæval chaos. In the first,
The *Golden Hynde*, a ship of eighteen guns,
Drake sailed: John Wynter, a queen's cap-
tain, next

Brought out the *Elizabeth*, a stout new ship
Of sixteen guns. The pinnace *Christopher*

Came next, in staunch command of old

Tom Moone

Who, five years back, with reeking powder
grimed,

Off Cartagena fought against the stars

All night, and, as the sun arose in blood,

Knee-deep 'in blood and brine, stood in the
dark

Perilous hold and scuttled his own ship

The *Swan*, bidding her down to God's great
deep

Rather than yield her up a prize to Spain.

Lastly two gentleman-adventurers

Brought out the new *Swan* and the *Marygold*.

Their crews, all told, were eight score men
and boys.

Not only terrors of the deep they braved,

Bodiless witchcrafts of the black abyss,

Red gaping mouths of hell and gulfs of fire

That yawned for all who passed the tropic
line;

But death lurked round them from their
setting forth.

Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain,
By spies informed, had swiftly warned his
king,

Who sent out mandates through his huge
empire

From Guadalchiber to the golden West
For the instant sinking of all English ships
And the instant execution of their crews
Who durst appear in the Caribbean sea.

Moreover, in the pith of their emprise
A peril lurked—Burleigh's emissaries,
The smooth-tongued Thomas Doughty, who
had brought

His brother—unacquitted of that charge
Of poisoning, raised against him by the
friends

Of Essex, but in luckless time released
Lately for lack of proof, on no strong plea.
These two wound through them like two
snakes at ease

In Eden, waiting for their venomous hour.
Especially did Thomas Doughty toil
With soft 'and flowery tongue to win his
way ;

And Drake, whose rich imagination craved
For something more than simple seamans'
talk,

Was marvellously drawn to' this new friend
Who with the scholar's mind, the courtier's
gloss,

The lawyer's wit, the adventurer's romance,
Gold honey from the blooms of Euphues,
Rare flashes from the *Mermaid* and sweet
smiles

Copied from Sidney's self, even to the
glance

Of sudden, liquid sympathy, gave Drake
That banquet of the soul he ne'er had
known

Nor needed till he knew, but needed now.
So to the light of Doughty's answering eyes
He poured his inmost thoughts out, hour by
hour ;

And Doughty coiled up in the heart of
Drake.

Against such odds the tiny fleet set sail ;
Yet gallantly and with heroic pride,
Escutcheoned pavisades, emblazoned poops,
Banners and painted shields and close-fights
hung

With scarlet broideries. Every polished gun
Grinned through the jaws of some heraldic
beast,

Gilded and carven and gleaming with all
hues ;

While in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*
Rich perfumes floated, given by the great
Queen

Herself to Drake as Captain-General;
So that it seemed her soul was with the
fleet,

A presence to remind him, far away,
Of how he talked with England, face to
face,—

No pirate he, but Gloriana's knight.
Silver and gold his table furniture,
Engraved and richly chased, lavishly gleamed
While, fanned by favouring airs, the ships
advanced

With streaming flags and ensigns and sweet
chords

Of music struck by skilled musicians
Whom Drake brought with him, not from
vanity,

But knowing how the pulse of men beats high

To music; and the hearts of men like these
Were open to the high romance of earth,
And they that dwelt so near God's mystery
Were proud of their own manhood. They
went out

To danger as to a sweetheart far away,
Who even now was drawing the western
clouds

Like a cymar of silk and snow-white furs
Close to her, till her body's beauty seemed
Clad in a mist of kisses. They desired
Her glittering petulance and her sulky sweet
Red pouts of anger. They went out to her
With pomp and ceremony, richly attired
And girt about with honour as befit
Souls that might talk with angels by the
way.

Light as the sea-birds dipping their white
wings

In foam before the gently heaving prows
Each heart beat, while the low soft lapping
 splash

Of water racing past them ripped and tore
Whiter and faster, and the bellying sails
Filled out, and the white cliffs of England
 sank

Dwindling behind the broad grey plains of
 sea.

Meekly content and tamely stay-at-home
The sea-birds seemed that piped across the
 waves;

And Drake, be-mused, leaned smiling to his
 friend

Doughty and said, "Is it not strange to know
When we return yon speckled herring-gulls
Will still be wheeling, dipping, flashing there
Just as we leave them? Ah, my heart cries
 out

We shall not find a sweeter land afar

Than those thyme-scented hills we leave
behind!

Soon the young lambs will bleat across the
combes,

And breezes will bring puffs of hawthorn scent
Down Devon lanes; over the purple moors
Lavrocks will carol and the plover cry,
The nesting peewit cry; on village greens
Around the May-pole, while the moon hangs
low,

The boys and girls of England merrily swing
In country footing through the flowery dance;
Roses return: I blame them not who stay,
I blame them not at all who cling to home.
For many of us indeed shall not return,
Nor ever know that sweetness any more.
But when our English clover once again
Reddens round valleys thick with waving gold,
Many beyond the faintest flush of dawn
Shall sleep for ever in the cold green sea:

'Tis only we poor wandering prodigals
That know the worth and wealth of heaven
and home.

Bear with my weakness, for my heart is full
Of yonder England, our sweet Ida mount,
Mother of all our hopes and dreams and
prayers;

Nor do I think a man needs be ashamed
Whose eyes grow wet to leave his native
land;

For there is nought a man should hold more
dear

Than his own country and his father's home."

Then the other with a laugh, "Nay, like the
man

Who slept a hundred years we shall return
And find our England strange: there are
great storms

Brewing; God only knows what we shall
find—

Perchance a Spanish king upon the throne!
What then?" And Drake, "I should put
down my helm,

And out once more to the unknown golden
West

To die, as I have lived, an Englishman."

So said he, while the white cliffs dwindled
down,

Faded, and vanished; but the prosperous
wind

Carried the five ships onward over the swell
Of swinging, sweeping seas, till the sun sank,
And height o'er height the chaos of the
skies

Broke out into the miracle of the stars.

Frostily glittering, all the Milky Way

Lay bare like diamond-dust upon the robe

Of some great king. Orion and the Plough

Glimmered through drifting gulfs of silver
fleece,

And, far away, in Italy, that night
Young Galileo, looking upward, heard
The self-same whisper through that wild
abyss

Which now called Drake out to the un-
known West.

But, after supper, Drake came up on deck
With Doughty, and on the cold poop as
they leaned

And gazed across the rolling gleam and
gloom

Of mighty muffled seas, began to give
Voice to those lovely captives of the brain
Which, like princesses in some forest-tower,
Still yearn for the delivering prince, the
sweet

Far bugle-note that calls from answering
minds.

He told him how, in those dark days which
now

Seemed like an evil dream, when the Princess
Elizabeth even trembled for her life
And read there, by the gleam of Smithfield
fires,

Those cunning lessons of diplomacy
Which saved her then and now for Eng-
land's sake,

He passed his youth. 'Twas when the
power of Rome

Began to light the gloom with that great
glare

Of martyrdom which, while the stars endure,
Bears witness how men overcame the world,
Trod the red flames beneath their feet like
flowers,

Yea, cast aside the blackening robe of flesh,
While with a crown of joy upon their
heads,

Even as into a palace, they passed through

The portals of the tomb to prove their love
Stronger at least than death: and, in those
days

A Puritan, with iron in his soul,
Having in earlier manhood occupied
His business in great waters and beheld
The bloody cowls of the Inquisition pass
Before the midnight moon as he kept watch;
And having then forsworn the steely sea
To dwell at home in England with his love
At Tavistock in Devon, Edmund Drake
Began, albeit too near the Abbey walls,
To speak too staunchly for his ancient faith;
And with his young child Francis, had to
flee

By night at last for shelter to the coast.
Little the boy remembered of that flight,
Pillioned behind his father, save the clang
And clatter of the hoofs on stony ground

Striking a sharp blue fire, while country
tales

Of highwaymen kindled his reckless heart
As the great steed went shouldering through
the night.

There Francis, laying a little sunburnt
hand

On the big holstered pistol at each side, "
Dreamed with his wide grey eyes that he
himself

Was riding out on some freebooting quest,
And felt himself heroic. League by league
The magic world rolled past him as they
rode,

Leaving him nothing but a memory
Of his own making. Vaguely he perceived
A thousand meadows darkly 'streaming by
With clouds of perfume from their secret
flowers,

A wayside cottage-window pointing out

A golden finger o'er the purple road;
A puff of garden roses or a waft
Of honeysuckle blown along a wood,
While overhead that silver ship, the moon,
Sailed slowly down the gulfs of glittering
stars,

Till, at the last, a buffet of fresh wind
Fierce with sharp savours of the stinging
brine

Against his dreaming face brought up a roar
Of mystic welcome from the Channel seas.
And there Drake paused for a moment, as a
song •

Stole o'er the waters from the *Marygold*
Where some musician, striking luscious chords
Of sweet-stringed music, freed his heart's
desire •

In symbols of the moment, which the rest,
And Doughty among them, scarce could un-
derstand.

SONG.

*The moon is up : the stars are bright :
The wind is fresh and free !
We're out to seek for gold to-night
Across the silver sea !
The world was growing grey and old :
Break out the sails again !
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*We're sick of all the cringing knees,
The courtly smiles and lies !
God, let Thy singing Channel breeze
Lighten our hearts and eyes !
Let love no more be bought and sold
For earthly loss or gain :
We're out to seek an Age of Gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*Beyond the light of far Cathay,
Beyond all mortal dreams,
Beyond the reach of night and day
Our Eldorado gleams,
Revealing—as the skies unfold—
A star without a stain,
The Glory of the Gates of Gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

And, as the skilled musician made the words
Of momentary meaning still imply
His own eternal hope and heart's desire,
Without belief, perchance, in Drake's own
quest—

To Drake's own greater mind the eternal
glory

Seemed to transfigure his immediate hope.

But Doughty only heard a sweet concourse

Of sounds. They ceased. And Drake re-
sumed his tale

Of that strange flight in boyhood to the
sea.

Next, the red-curtained inn and kindly hands
Of Protestant Plymouth held his memory
long;

Often in strange and distant dreams he saw
That scene which now he tenderly pourtrayed
To Doughty's half-ironic smiling lips,
Half-sympathetic eyes; he saw again
That small inn parlour with the homely fare
Set forth upon the table, saw the gang
Of seamen reeking from the spray come in,
Like great new thoughts to some 'adventurous
brain.

Feeding his wide grey eyes he saw them
stand

Around the crimson fire and stamp their feet
And scatter the salt drops from their big sea-
boots;

And all that night he lay awake and heard

Mysterious thunderings of eternal tides
Moaning out of a cold and houseless gloom
Beyond the world, that made it seem most
sweet

To slumber in a little four-walled inn
Immune from all that vastness. But at
dawn

He awoke, he leapt from bed, he ran and
lookt,

There, through the tiny high bright case-
ment, there,—

Oh, fairy vision of that small boy's face
Peeping at 'daybreak through the diamond
pane!—

There first he saw the wondrous new-born
world,

And round its princely shoulders wildly
flowing,

Gemmed with a myriad clusters of the sun,
The magic azure mantle of the sea.

And, afterwards, there came those marvellous
days

When, on that battleship, a disused hulk
Rotting to death in Chatham Reach, they
found

Sanctuary and a dwelling-place at last.

For Hawkins, that great ship-man, being
their friend,

A Protestant, with power on Plymouth town,
Nigh half whereof he owned, made Edmund
Drake

Reader of prayer to all the ships of war
That lay therein. So there the dreaming
boy,

Francis, grew up in that grim nursery
Among the ropes and masts and great dumb
mouths

Of idle ordnance. In that hulk he heard
Many a time his father and his friends
Over some wild-eyed troop of refugees

Thunder against the powers of Spain and
Rome,

"Idolaters who defiled the House of God
In England;" and all round them, as he
heard,

The clang and clatter of shipwright hammers
rang,

And hour by hour upon his vision rose,

In solid oak reality, new ships,

As Ilion rose to music, ships of war,

The visible shapes and symbols of his
dream,

Unconscious yet, but growing as they grew,

A wondrous incarnation, hour by hour,

Till with their towering masts they stood
complete,

Embodied thoughts, in God's own dockyards
built,

For Drake ere long to lead against the
world.

There, as to round the tale with ringing
gold,
Across the waters from the full-plumed *Swan*
The music of a *Mermaid* roundelay—
Our Lady of the Sea, a Dorian theme
Tuned to the soul of England—charmed the
moon.

SONG.

I.

Queen Venus wandered away with a cry,—
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—
For the purple wound in Adon's thigh;
Je vous en prie, pity me ;
With a bitter farewell from sky to sky,
And a moan, a moan from sea to sea;
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?

II.

The soft Ægean heard her sigh,—

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—

Heard the Spartan hills reply,

Je vous en prie, pity me;

Spain was aware of her drawing nigh

, Foot-gilt from the blossoms of Italy;

N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

III.

In France they heard her voice go by,—

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—

And on the May-wind droop and die,

Je vous en prie, pity me;

Your maidens choose their loves, but I—

White as I came from the foam-white sea,

N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

IV.

The warm red-meal-winged butterfly,—

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—

Beat on her breast in the golden rye,—

Je vous en prie, pity me,—

Stained her breast with a dusty dye

Red as the print of a kiss might be!

N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

V.

Is there no land, afar or nigh,—

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—

But dreads the kiss o' the sea? Ah, why—

Je vous en prie, pity me!—

Why will ye cling to the loves that die?

Is earth all Adon to my plea?

N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

VI.

Under the warm blue summer sky,—

N'erez vous, mon bel ami?—

With outstretched arms and a low long
sigh,—

Je vous en prie, pity me;—

Over the Channel they saw her fly

To the white-cliffed island that crowns
the sea,

N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

VII.

England laughed as her queen drew nigh,—

N'ose z vous, mon bel ami?—

To the white-walled cottages gleaming high,

Je vous en prie, pity me!

They drew her in with a joyful cry
 To the hearth where she sits with a
 babe on her knee,
She has turned her moan to a lullaby,
 She is nursing a son to the kings of
 the sea,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
 N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?

Such memories, on the plunging *Golden*
 Hynde,
Under the stars, Drake drew before his
 friend
Doughty; but touched most briefly on his
 great
Voyage to Darien, and the famous Tree,
And those wild exploits down to Rio Grande
Which even now had made his fierce renown
Terrible to all lonely ships of Spain.
E'en now, indeed, that poet of Portugal,

Lope de Vega, filled with this new fear
Began to meditate his epic muse
Till, like a cry of panic from his lips,
He shrilled the faint *Dragontea* forth, wherein
Drake is that Dragon of the Apocalypse,
The dread Antagonist of God and Man.

Well had it been for Doughty on that night
Had he not heard what followed ; for, indeed,
When two minds clash, not often does the
less

Conquer the greater ; but, without one
thought

Of evil, seeing they now were safe at sea,
Drake told him, only somewhat, yet too
much,

Of that close conference with the Queen.
And lo,

The face of Doughty blanched with a slow
thought

That crept like a cold worm through all his
brain,

“Thus much I knew, though secretly,
before;

But here he freely tells me as his friend ;

If I am false and he is what they say,

His knowledge of my knowledge will mean
death.”

But Drake looked round at Doughty with a
smile

And said, “Forgive me now: thou art not
used

To these cold nights at sea! thou tremblest,
friend;

Let us go down and drink a cup of sack

To our return!” And at that kindly smile

Doughty shook off his nightmare mood, and
thought,

“I am no sea-dog, but a man of birth!

The yard-arm is for dogs, not gentlemen!

Even Drake would not misuse a man of
birth ! ”

And in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*

Revolving subtle treacheries he sat.

There with the sugared phrases of the court

And general sentiments which Drake believed

Were revelations of the man's own mind,

Bartering beads for gold, he drew out all

The simple Devon seaman's inmost heart,

And coiled up in the soul of Francis Drake.

There in the solemn night they interchanged

Lies for sweet confidences. From one wall

The picture of Drake's love looked down on
him ;

And, like a bashful schoolboy's, that bronzed
face

Flushed as he blurted out with brightening
eyes

And quickening breath how he had seen her
first,

Crowned on the village green, a Queen of
May.

Her name, too, was Elizabeth, he said,
As if it proved that she, too, was a queen,
Though crowned with milk-white Devon may
alone,

And queen but of one plot of meadow-sweet.
As yet, he said, he had only kissed her
hand,

Smiled in her eyes and—there Drake also
blanched,

Thinking, "I ne'er may see her face again,"
And Doughty comforted his own dark heart
Thinking, "I need not fear so soft a soul
As this"; and yet, he wondered how the
man,

Seeing his love so gripped him, none the
less

Could leave her, thus to follow after dreams;
For faith to Doughty was an unknown word,

And trustfulness the property of fools.
At length they parted, each to his own
couch,
Doughty with half a chuckle, Francis Drake
With one old-fashioned richly grateful prayer
Blessing all those he loved, as he had learnt
Beside his mother's knee in Devon days.

•

So all night long they sailed; but when a
rift
Of orchard crimson broke the yellowing
gloom
And barred the closely clouded East with
dawn,
Behold, a giant galleon overhead,
Lifting its huge black shining sides on high,
Loomed like some misty monster of the deep:
And, sullenly rolling out great gorgeous folds
Over her rumbled like a thunder-cloud
The heavy flag of Spain. The splendid poop,

Mistily lustrous as a dragon's hoard
Seen in some magic cave-mouth o'er the sea
Through shimmering April sunlight after
rain,
Blazed to the morning; 'and her port-holes
grinned
With row on row of cannon. There at once
One sharp shrill whistle sounded, and those
five
Small ships, mere minnows clinging to the
flanks
Of that Leviathan, unseen, unheard,
Undreamt of, grappled her. She seemed
asleep,
Swinging at ease with great half-slackened
sails,
Majestically careless of the dawn.
There in the very native seas of Spain,
There with the yeast and foam of her proud
cliffs,

Her own blue coasts, in sight across the
waves,

Up her Titanic sides without a sound
The naked-footed British seamen swarmed
With knives between their teeth: then on
her decks

They dropped like panthers, and the softly
fierce

Black-bearded watch of Spaniards, all amazed,
Rubbing their eyes as if at a wild dream,
Upraised a sudden shout, *El Draque! El*
Draque!

And flashed their weapons out, but all too
late;

For, ere their sleeping comrades reached the
deck,

The little watch, out-numbered and out-
matched,

Lay bound, and o'er the hatches everywhere
The points of naked cutlasses on guard

Gleamed, and without a struggle those below
Gave up their arms, their poignards jewelled
thick

With rubies, and their blades of Spanish
steel.

Then onward o'er the great grey gleaming sea
They swept with their rich booty, night and
day.

Five other prizes, one for every ship,
Out of the seas of Spain they suddenly
caught
And carried with them, laughing as they
went—

“Now, now indeed the Rubicon is crossed;
Now have we singed the eyelids and the
beard

Of Spain; now have we roused the hornet's
nest;

Now shall we sail against a world in arms;

Now we have nought between us and black
death

But our own hands, five ships, and three
score guns."

So laughed they, plunging through the bay
of storms,

Biscay, and past Gibraltar, not yet clothed
With British thunder, though, as one might
dream,

Gazing in dim prophetic grandeur out
Across the waves while that small fleet went
by,

Or watching them with love's most wistful
fear

As they plunged Southward to the lonely
coasts

Of Africa, till right in front up-soared,
Tremendous over ocean, Teneriffe,
Cloud-robed, but crowned with colours of
the dawn.

Already those two traitors were at work,
Doughty and his false brother, among the
crews,

Who knew not yet the vastness of their quest,
Nor dreamed of aught 'beyond the accus-
tomed world;

For Drake had kept it secret, and the
thoughts

Of some that he had shipped before the
mast

Set sail scarce farther than for Mogadore
In West Morocco, or at the utmost mark
For northern Egypt, by the midnight woods
And crystal palace roofed with chrysoprase
Where Prester John had reigned five hundred
years,

And Sydon, river of jewels, through the dark
Enchanted gorges rolled its rays along!

Some thought of Rio Grande; but scarce to
ten

The true intent was known ; while to divert
The rest from care the skilled musicians
played.

But those two Doughtys cunningly devised
By chance-dropt 'words to breathe a hint
abroad ;

And through the foc'sles crept a grisly fear
Of things that lay beyond the bourne of
earth,

Till even those hardy seamen almost quailed ;
And now, at any moment, they might turn
With terror in their eyes. They might
refuse

To sail into that fabled burning Void
Or brave that *primum mobile* which drew
O'er-daring ships into the jaws of hell
Beyond the Pole Antarticke, where the sea
Rushed down through fiery mountains, and
no sail

Could e'er return against its roaring stream.

Now down the coast of Barbary they cruised
Till Christmas Eve embraced them in the
heart

Of summer. In a bay of mellow calm
They moored, and as the fragrant twilight
brought

The stars, the sound of song and dance
arose;

And down the shores in stealthy silence
crept,

Out of the massy forest's emerald gloom,
The naked, dark-limbed children of the
night,

Unseen, to gaze upon the floating glare
Of revelry; unheard, to hear that strange
New music of the gods, where o'er the
soft

Ripple and wash of the lanthorn-crimsoned
tide

Will Harvest's voice above the chorus rang.

SONG.

*In Devonshire, now, the Christmas chime
Is carolling over the lea ;
And the sexton-shovels away the snow
From the old church porch, maybe ;
And the waits with their lanthorns and noses
a-glow
Come round for their Christmas fee ;
But, as in old England it's Christmas-time,
Why, so is it here at sea,
My lads,
Why, so is it here at sea !*

*When the ship comes home, from turret to poop
Filled full with Spanish gold,
There'll be many a country dance and joke,
And many a tale to be told ;
Every old woman shall have a red cloak
To fend her against the cold ;*

*And every old man shall have a big round stoup
Of jolly good ale and old,
My lads,
Jolly good ale and old !*

But on the morrow came a prosperous wind
Whereof they took advantage, and shook out
The flashing sails, and held their Christmas feast
Upon the swirling ridges of the sea :
And, sweeping Southward with full many a
rouse
And shout of laughter, at the fall of day,
While the black prows drove, leapt, and
plunged, and ploughed
Through the broad dazzle of sunset-coloured
tides,
Outside the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*,
Where Drake and his chief captains dined
in state,
The skilled musicians made a great new song.

SONG.

I.

*Happy by the hearth sit the lasses and the lads, now,
Roasting of their chestnuts, toasting of their
toes !*

*When the door is opened to a blithe new-comer,
Stamping like a ploughman to shuffle off the
snows ;*

*Rosy flower-like faces through the soft red fire-
light*

*Float as if to greet us, far away at sea,
Sigh as they remember, and turn the sigh to
laughter,*

*Kiss beneath the mistletoe and wonder at their
glee.*

With their " heigh ho, the holly !

This life is most jolly !"

Christmas-time is kissing-time ;

Away with melancholy !

II.

*Ah, the Yule of England, the happy Yule of
England,*

*Yule of berried holly and the merry mistletoe ;
The boar's head, the brown ale, the blue snapdragon,
Yule of groaning tables and the crimson log
aglow !*

*Yule, the golden bugle to the scattered old com-
panions,*

*Ringin' as with laughter, shining as through
tears !*

*Loved of little children, oh guard the holy Yule-
tide,*

*Guard it, men of England, for the child be-
yond the years.*

With its "heigh ho, the holly !"

Away with melancholy !

Christmas-time is kissing-time,

"This life is most jolly !"

Now to the Fortunate Islands of old time
They came, and found no glory as of old
Encircling them, no red ineffable calm
Of sunset round crowned faces pale with bliss
Like evening stars; but rugged, waste, and
wild

Those isles were when they neared them,
though afar

They beautifully smouldered in the sun
Like dusky purple jewels fringed and frayed
With silver foam across that ancient sea
Of wonder. On the largest of the seven
Drake landed Doughty with his musketeers
To exercise their weapons and to seek
Supplies among the matted uncouth huts
Which, as the ships drew round each ragged
cliff,

Crept like remembered misery into sight;
Oh, like the strange dull waking from a
dream

They blotted out the rosy courts and fair
Imagined marble thresholds of the King
Achilles and the heroes that were gone.
But Drake cared nought for these things.

Such a heart

He had, to make each utmost ancient bourne
Of man's imagination but a point
Of new departure for his Golden Dream.
But Doughty with his men ashore, alone,
Among the sparse wind-bitten groves of
palm,

Kindled their fears of all they must endure
On that immense adventure. Nay, sometimes
He hinted of a voyage far beyond
All history and fable, far beyond
Even that Void whence only two returned,—
Columbus, with his men in mutiny;
Magellan, who could only hound his crew
Onward by threats of death, until they
turned

In horror from the Threat that lay before,
Preferring to be hanged as mutineers
Rather than venture farther. Nor indeed
Did even Magellan at the last return;
But, with all hell a'round him, in the clutch
Of devils d'jed upon some savage isle
By poisonous black enchantment. Not in
vain

Were Doughty's words on that volcanic
shore

Among the stunted dark acacia trees,
Whose heads, all bent one way by the
trade-wind,

Pointed North-east by North, South-west by
West,

Ambiguous sibyls that with wizened arms
Mysteriously declared a twofold path,
Homeward or onward. But aboard the ships,
Among the hardier seamen, old Tom Moone,
With one or two stout comrades, overbore

All doubts and questionings with blither tales
Of how they sailed to Darien and heard
Nightingales in November all night long
As down a coast like Paradise they cruised
Through seas of lasting summer, Eden isles,
Where birds like rainbows, butterflies like
 gems,
And flowers like coloured fires o'er 'fairy
 creeks
Floated and flashed beneath the shadowy
 palms;
While ever and anon a bark canoe
With naked Indian maidens flower-festooned
Put out from shadowy coves, laden with fruit
Ambrosial o'er the silken shimmering sea.
And once a troop of nut-brown maidens
 came—
So said Tom Moone, a twinkle in his eye—
Swimming to meet them through the warm
 blue waves

And wantoned through the water, like those
nymphs

Which one green April at the Mermaid Inn
He heard Kit Marlowe mightily pourtray,
Among his boon companions, in a song
Of Love that swam the sparkling Hellespont
Upheld by nymphs, not lovelier than these,—
Though whiter yet not lovelier than these;
For those like flowers, but these like rounded
fruit

Rosily ripening through the clear tides tossed
From nut-brown breast and arm all round
the ship

The thousand-coloured spray. Shapely of
limb

They were; but as they laid their small
brown hands

Upon the ropes we cast them, Captain Drake
Suddenly thundered at them and bade them
pack

For a troop of naughty wenches! At that
tale

A tempest of fierce laughter rolled around
The foc'sle; but one boy from London town,
A pale-faced prentice, run-away to sea,
Asking why Drake had bidden them pack so
soon,

Tom Moone turned to him with his deep-sea
growl,

"Because our Captain is no pink-eyed boy
Nor soft-limbed Spaniard, but a staunch-
souled Man,

Full-blooded; nerved like iron; with a girl
He loves at home in Devon; and a mind
For ever bent upon some mighty goal,
I know not what—but 'tis enough for me
To know my Captain knows." And then he
told

How sometimes o'er the gorgeous forest
gloom

Some marble city, rich, mysterious, white,
An ancient treasure-house of Aztec kings,
Or palace of forgotten Incas gleamed;
And in their dim rich lofty cellars gold,
Beyond all wildest' dreams, great bars of
gold, ,

Like pillars, tossed in mighty chaos, gold
And precious stones, agate and emerald,
Diamond, sapphire, ruby, and sardonyx.
So said he, as they waited the return
Of Doughty, resting in the foc'sle gloom,
Or idly couched about the sun-swept decks
On sails or coils of rope, while overhead
Some boy would climb the rigging and look
out,

Arching his hand to see if Doughty came.
But when he came, he came with a strange
face
Of feigned despair; and with a stammering
tongue

He vowed he could not find those poor
supplies

Which Drake himself in other days had
found

Upon that self-same island. But, perchance,
This was a barren year, he said. And Drake
Looked at him, suddenly, and at the
musketeers. *

Their eyes were strained; their faces wore a
cloud.

That night he said no more; but on the
morn,

Mistrusting nothing, Drake with subtle sense
Of weather-wisdom, through that little fleet
Distributed his crews anew. And all

The prisoners and the prizes at those isles
They left behind them, taking what they
would

From out their carven cabins,—glimmering
silks,

Chiselled Toledo blades, and broad doubloons.
And lo, as they weighed anchor, far away
Behind them on the blue horizon line
It seemed a city of towering masts arose;
And from the crow's nest of the *Golden*
Hynde .

A seaman cried, "By God; the hunt is
up!"

And like a tide of triumph through their
veins

The red rejoicing blood began to race
As there they saw the avenging ships of
Spain,

Eight mighty galleons, nosing out their trail.
And Drake growled, "Oh, my lads of Bide-
ford,

It cuts my heart to show the hounds our
heels;

But we must not imperil our great quest!
Such fights as that must wait—as our reward

When we return. Yet I will not put on
One stitch of sail. So, lest they are not too
slow

To catch us, clear the decks. God, I would
like

To fight them!" So the little fleet advanced
With decks all cleared and shotted guns and
men

Bare-armed beside them, hungering to be
caught,

And quite distracted from their former
doubts;

For danger, in that kind, they never feared.
But soon the heavy Spaniards dropped be-
hind;

And not in vain had Thomas Doughty sown
The seeds of doubt; for many a brow grew
black

With sullen-seeming care that erst was gay.
But happily and in good time there came,

Not from behind them now, but right in
front,

On the first sun-down of their quest renewed,
Just as the sea grew dark around their ships,
A chance that-loosed heart-gnawing doubt
in deeds.

For through a mighty zone of golden haze
Blotting the purple of the gathering night
A galleon like a floating mountain moved
To meet them, clad with sunset and with
dreams.

Her masts and spars immense in jewelled mist
Shimmered: her rigging, like an emerald web
Of golden spiders, tangled half the stars!
Embodied sunset, dragging the soft sky
O'er dazzled ocean, through the night she
drew

Out of the unknown lands; and round a
prow

That jutted like a moving promontory

Over a cloven wilderness of foam,
Upon a lofty blazoned scroll her name
San Salvador challenged obsequious isles
Where'er she rode; who kneeling like dark
slaves

Before some great Sultàn must lavish forth
From golden cornucopias, East and West,
Red streams of rubies, cataracts of pearl.
But, at a signal from their admiral, all
Those five small ships lay silent in the
gloom

Which, just as if some god were on their side,
Covered them in the dark troughs of the
waves,

Letting her pass to leeward. On she came,
Blazing with lights, a City of the Sea,
Belted with crowding towers and clouds of
sail,

And round her bows a long-drawn thunder
rolled

Splendid with foam; but ere she passed
them by

Drake gave the word, and with one crimson
flash

Two hundred yards' of black and hidden sea
Leaped into sight between them as the roar
Of twenty British cannon shattered the night.
Then' after her they drove, like black sea-
wolves

Behind some royal high-branched stag of ten,
Hanging upon those bleeding foam-flecked
flanks,

Leaping, snarling, worrying, as they went
In full flight down the wind; for those light
ships

Much speedier than their huge antagonist,
Keeping to windward, worked their will with
her.

In vain she burnt wild lights and strove to
scan

The darkening deep. Her musketeers in vain
Provoked the crackling night with random
fires:

In vain her broadside bellowings burst at
large

As if the Gates of Erebus unrolled.

For ever and anon the deep-sea gloom

From some new quarter, like a dragon's
mouth

Opened and belched forth crimson flames
and tore

Her sides as if with iron claws unseen;

Till, all at once, rough voices close at hand

Out of the darkness thundered, "Grapple
her!"

And, falling on their knees, the Spaniards
knew

The Dragon of that red Apocalypse.

There with one awful cry, *El Draque! El
Draque!*

They cast their weapons from them; for the
moon

Rose, eastward, and against her rising black
Over the bloody bulwarks Francis Drake,
Grasping the great hilt of his naked sword,
Towered for a moment to their startled eyes
Through all the zenith like the King of Hell.
Then he leaped down upon their shining
decks,

And after him swarmed and towered and
leapt in haste

A brawny band of three score Englishmen,
Gigantic as they loomed against the sky
And risen, it seemed, by miracle from the sea.
So small were those five ships below the walls
Of that huge floating mountain. Royally
Drake, from the swart commander's trem-
bling hands

Took the surrendered sword, and bade his
men

Gather the fallen weapons on an heap,
And placed a guard about them, while the
moon

Silvering the rolling seas for many a mile
Glanced on the huddled Spaniards' rich
attire,

As like one picture of despair they grouped
Under the splintered main-mast's creaking
shrouds,

And the great swinging shadows of the sails
Mysteriously swept the gleaming decks;
Where many a butt of useless cannon
gloomed

Along the accoutred bulwarks or upturned,
As the ship wallowed in the heaving deep,
Dumb mouths of empty menace to the stars.

Then Drake appointed Doughty, with a
guard,

To sail the prize on to the next dim isle

Where they might leave her, taking aught
they would

From out her carven cabins and rich holds.

And Doughty's heart leaped in him as he
thought, .

"I have my chance at last"; but Drake,
who still

Trusted the man, made surety doubly sure,

And in his wary weather-wisdom sent

—Even as a breathing type of friendship,
sent—

His brother, Thomas Drake, aboard the
prize;

But set his brother, his own flesh and blood,

Beneath the man, as if to say, "I give

My loyal friend dominion over me."

So courteously he dealt with him; but he,

Seeing his chance once more slipping away,

Raged inwardly and, from his own false
heart

Imputing his own evil, he contrived
A cunning charge that night; and when
they came

Next day, at noon, upon the destined isle,
He suddenly spat the secret venom forth,
With such fierce wrath in his defeated soul
That he himself almost believed the charge.
For when Drake stepped on the *San*
Salvador

To order all things duly about the prize,
What booty they must keep and what let go,
Doughty received him with a blustering voice
Of red mock-righteous wrath, "Is this the way
Englishmen play the pirate, Francis Drake?
While thou wast dreaming of thy hero's
crown—

God save the mark!—thy brother, nay, thy
spy,

Must play the common pilferer, must convert
The cargo to his uses, rob us all

Of what we risked our necks to win: he
wears

The ransom of an emperor round his throat
That might enrich us all. Who saw him
wear

That chain of rubies ere last night?"

And Drake,

"Answer him, brother;" and his brother
smiled

And answered, "Nay, I never wore this chain
Before last night; but Doughty knows, in-
deed,

For he was with me—and none else was
there

But Doughty,—'tis my word against his
word,

That close on midnight we were summoned
down

To an English seaman who lay dying below
Unknown to any of us, a prisoner

*In chains, that had been captured none knew
where,*

For all his mind was far from Darien,
And wandering evermore through Devon lanes
At home; whom we released; and from his
waist

He took this hidden chain and gave it me,
Begging me that if ever I returned
To Bideford in Devon I would go
With whatsoever wealth it might produce
To his old mother who, with wrinkled hands
In some small white-washed cottage o'er the
sea,

Where wall-flowers bloom in April, even now
Is turning pages of the well-worn Book
And praying for her son's return, nor knows
That he lies cold upon the heaving main.
But this he asked; and this in all good faith
I swore to do; and even now he died,
And hurrying hither from his side I clasped

His chain of rubies round my neck awhile,
In full sight of the sun. I have no more
To say." Then up spoke Hatton's trumpeter :
"But I have more to say. Last night I saw
Doughty, but not in full sight of the sun,
Nor once, nor twice, but three times at the
least,

Carrying chains of gold, clusters of gems,
And whatsoever wealth he could convey
Into his cabin and smuggle in smallest space"
"Nay," Doughty stammered, mixing sneer
and lie,

Yet bolstering up his courage with the thought
That being what courtiers called a gentleman
He ranked above the rude sea-discipline,
"Nay, they were free gifts from the Spanish
crew

Because I treated them with courtesy."
Then bluff Will Harvest, "That perchance
were true,

For he hath been close closeted for hours
With their chief officers, drinking their health
In our own war-bought wine, while down
below

Their captured English seaman groaned his
last."

Then Drake, whose utter silence, with a sense
Of infinite power and justice, ruled 'their
hearts,

Suddenly thundered—and the traitor blanched
And quailed before him. "This my flesh
and blood

I placed beneath thee as my dearer self!
But thou, in trampling on him, shalt not say
I charge thy brother. Nay, thou chargest
me!

Against me only hast thou stirred this strife;
And now, by God, shalt thou learn, once
for all,

That I, thy captain for this voyage, hold

BOOK II.

III

The supreme power of judgment in my
hands.

Get thee aboard my flagship! When I come
I shall have more to say to thee; but thou,
My brother, take this galleon in thy charge;
For, as I see, she holdeth all the stores
Which Doughty failed to find. She shall
return

With us to that New World from which
she came.

But now let these our prisoners all embark
In yonder pinnace; let them all go free.

I care not to be cumbered on my way
Through dead Magellan's unattempted dream
With chains and prisoners. In that Golden
World

Which means much more to me than I can
speak,

Much more, much more than I can speak
or breathe,

Being, behind whatever name it bears—
Earthly Paradise, Island of the Saints,
Cathay, or Zipangu, or Hy Brasil—
The eternal symbol of my soul's desire,
A sacred country shining on the sea,
That Vision without which, the wise king
said,

A people perishes; in that place of hope,
That Tirn'an Og, that land of lasting youth,
Where whosoever sails with me shall drink
Fountains of immortality and dwell
Beyond the fear of death for evermore,
There shall we see the dust of battle dance
Everywhere in the sunbeam of God's peace!
Oh, in the new Atlantis of my soul
There are no captives: there the wind blows
free;

And, as in sleep, I have heard the marching
song

Of mighty peoples rising in the West,

Wonderful cities that shall set their foot
Upon the throat of all old tyrannies ;
And on the West wind I have heard a cry,
The shoreless cry of the prophetic sea
Heralding through that golden wilderness
The Soul whose path our task is to make
straight,
Freedom, the last great Saviour of mankind.
I know not what I know: these are wild
words,
Which as the sun draws out earth's morning
mists
Over dim fields where careless cattle sleep,
Some visionary Light, unknown, afar,
Draws from my darkling soul. Why should
we drag
Thither this Old-World weight of utter
gloom,
Or with the ballast of these heavy hearts
Make sail in sorrow for Pacific Seas?

Let us leave chains and prisoners to Spain;
But set these free to make their own way
home!"

So said he, groping blindly towards the truth,
And heavy with the treason of his friend.
His face was like a king's face as he spake,
For sorrows that strike deep reveal the deep;
And through the gateways of a ragged wound.
Sometimes a god will drive his chariot wheels
From some deep heaven within the hearts
of men.

Nevertheless, the immediate seamen there
Knowing how great a ransom they might ask
For some among their prisoners, men of
wealth

And high degree, scarce liked to free them
thus;

And only saw in Drake's conflicting moods
The moment's whim. "For little will he
care,'

They muttered, "when we reach those fabled
shores,

Whether his cannon break their golden
peace."

Yet to his face they murmured not at all;
Because his eyes compelled them like a law.
So there they freed the prisoners and set sail
Across the earth-shaking shoulders of the
broad

Atlantic, and the great grey slumbrous waves
Triumphantly swelled up to meet the keels.

BOOK III.

Now in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*
At dusk, Drake sent for Doughty. From
one wall

The picture of his love looked down on him;
And on the table lay the magic chart,
Drawn on a buffalo horn, all small peaked
isles,

Dwarf promontories, tiny twisted creeks,
And fairy harbours under elfin hills,
With marvellous inscriptions lined in red,—
As *Here is Gold*, or *Many Rubies Here*,
Or *Ware Witch-crafte*, or *Here is Cannibals*.
For in his great simplicity the man
Delighted in it, with the adventurous heart

Of boyhood poring o'er some well-thumbed
tale

On blue Twelfth Night beside the crimson
fire;

And o'er him, like the vision of a boy
In his first knighthood when, upon some
hill

Washed by the silver fringes of the sea,
Amidst the purple heather he lies and reads
Of Arthur and Avilion, like a star
His love's pure face looked down. There
Doughty came,

Half fearful, half defiant, with a crowd
Of jostling half-excuses on his lips,
And one dark swarm of adders in his heart.
For now what light of chivalry remained
In Doughty's mind was thickening with a
plot,

Subtler and deadlier than the serpent's first
Attempt on our first sire in Eden bower.

Drake, with a countenance open as the sun,
Received him, saying: "Forgive me, friend,
for I

Was hasty with thee. I wellnigh forgot
Those large and liberal nights we two have
passed

In this old cabin, telling all our dreams
And hopes, in friendship, o'er and o'er again.
But Vicary, thy lawyer friend, hath been
Pleading with me; and now I understand
All; so forgive,—for thou art hasty too,
And hast said things in passion which, 'fore
God,

I would not take from other men alive.
But now—I understand. Thou shalt no more
Be vexed with a divided mastership.
Indeed, I trust thee, Doughty; against all
Appearances I trust thee. Wilt thou not
Be friends with me? For now in ample
proof

Thou shalt take charge of this my *Golden
Hynde*

In all things, save of seamanship, which rests
With the ship's master under my command.
But I myself will sail upon the prize."

And with the word he gathered up the chart,
Took down his lady's picture with a smile,
Gripped Doughty's hand and left him, star-
ing, sheer

Bewildered with that magnanimity
Of faith, throughout all shadows, in some
light

Unseen behind the shadows. Thus did Drake
Give up his own fair cabin which he loved;
Being, it seemed, a little travelling home,
Fragrant with memories,—gave it, as he
thought,

In recompense to one whom he had wronged.
For even as his mind must ever yearn
To shores beyond the sunset, even so

He yearned through all dark shadows to his
friend,

And with his greater nature striving still
To comprehend the lesser, as the sky
Embraces our low earth, he would adduce
Justifications, thus: "These men of law
Are trained to plead for any and every cause,
To feign an indignation, or to prove
The worse is better and that black is white!
Small wonder that their passion goes astray:
Ah God, there is one prayer for all of us—
Enter not into judgment with Thy servant!"

Yet as his boat pulled tow'rd the Spanish
prize

Leaving the *Golden Hynde*, far off he heard
A voice that chilled him, 'as the voice of
Fate

Crying like some old Bellman through the
world.

SONG.

*Yes ; oh, yes ; if any seek
Laughter flown or lost delight,
Glancing eye or rosy cheek,
Love shall claim his own to-night !
Say, hath any lost a friend ?
Yes ; oh, yes !
Let his distress
In my ditty find its end.*

*Yes ; oh, yes ; here all is found !
Kingly palaces await
Each its rightful owner, crowned
King and consecrate,
Under the wet and wintry ground !
Yes ; oh, yes !
There sure redress
Lies where all is lost and found.*

And Doughty, though Drake's deed of kindness flashed

A moment's kind contrition through his heart,

Immediately, with all his 'lawyer's wit

True to the cause that hired him, laughed it by,

And straight began to weave the treacherous web

Of soft intrigue wherein he meant to snare

The passions of his comrades. Night and day,

As that small fleet drove onward o'er the deep,

Cleaving the sunset with their bright black prows

Or hunted by the red pursuing Dawn,

He stirred between the high-born gentlemen

(Whose white and jewelled hands, gallant in fight,

And hearts remembering Creçy and Poitiers,
Were of scant use in common seamanship),
Between these and the men whose rough
tarred arms

Were good at equal need in storm or war
Yet took a poorer portion of the prize,
He stirred a subtle jealousy and fanned
A fire that swiftly grew almost to hate.

For when the seamen must take precedence
Of loiterers on the deck—through half a
word,

Small, with intense device, like some fierce
lens,

He magnified their rude and blustering mode;
Or urged some scented fop, whose idle brain
Busied itself with momentary whims,
To bid the master alter here a sail,
Or there a rope; and, if the man refused,
Doughty, at night, across the wine-cups, raved
Against the rising insolence of the mob;

And hinted Drake himself was half to blame,
In words that seemed to say, "I am his
friend,

Or I should bid you think him all to blame."
So fierce indeed the strife became that once,
While Chester, Doughty's catspaw, played
with fire,

The grim ship-master growled between his
teeth,

"Remember, sir, remember, ere too late,
Magellan's mutinous vice-admiral's end."

And Doughty heard, and with a boisterous
laugh

Slapped the old sea-dog on the back and said,
"The gallows are for dogs, not gentlemen!"

Meanwhile his brother, sly John Doughty,
sought

To fan the seamen's fear of the unknown
world

With whispers and conjectures; and, at night,

He brought old books of Greek and Hebrew
down

Into the foc'sle, claiming by their aid
A knowledge of Black Art, and power to tell
The future, which he dreadfully displayed
There in the flickering light of the oily lamp,
Bending above their huge and swarthy palms
And tracing them to many a grisly doom.

So many a night and day westward they
plunged.

The half-moon ripened to its mellow round,
Dwindled again and ripened yet again.
And there was nought around them but the
grey

Ruin and roar of huge Atlantic seas.

And only like a memory of the world

They left behind them rose the same great sun,
And daily rolled his chariot through their sky,
Whereof the skilled musicians made a song.

SONG.

The same sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other,
Wherever we be ;
With the same goal before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Ringed round with the sea.

When the breakers charged thundering
In thousands all round us
With a lightning of lances
Uphurtled on high,
When the stout ships were sundering
A rapture hath crowned us,
Like the wild light that dances
On the crests that flash by.

When the waters lay breathless
Gazing at Hesper
Guarding the golden
Fruit of the tree,
Heard we the deathless
Wonderful whisper
Wafting the olden
Dream of the sea.

No land in the ring of it
Now, all around us
Only the splendid
Resurging unknown!
How should we sing of it?—
This that hath found us
By the great sun attended
In splendour, alone.

Ah! the broad miles of it,
White with the onset
Of waves without number
Warring for glee.

Ah! the soft smiles of it
Down to the sunset,
Holy for slumber,
The peace of the sea.

The wave's heart, exalted,
Leaps forward to meet us,
The sun on the sea-wave
Lies white as the moon:
The soft sapphire-vaulted
Deep heaven smiles to greet us,
Free sons of the free-wave
All singing one tune.

*The same sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other,
Wherever we be ;
With the same goal before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Queen of the sea.*

At last a faint-flushed April Dawn arose
With milk-white arms up-binding golden
clouds
Of fragrant hair behind her lovely head ;
And lo, before the bright black plunging prows
The whole sea suddenly shattered into shoals
Of rolling porpoises. Everywhere they tore
The glittering water. Like a moving crowd
Of black bright rocks washed smooth by
foaming tides,

They thrilled the unconscious fancy of the
crews

With subtle, wild, and living hints of land.
And soon Columbus' happy signals came,
The signs that saved him when his mutineers
Despaired at last and clamoured to return,—
And there, with awe triumphant in their eyes,
They saw, lazily tossing on the tide, '
A drift of seaweed and a berried branch,
Which silenced them as if they had seen a
Hand

Writing with fiery letters on the deep.
Then a black cormorant, vulture of the sea,
With neck outstretched and one long ominous
honk,
Went hurtling past them to its unknown
bourne.

A mighty white-winged albatross came next;
Then flight on flight of clamorous clanging
gulls;

And last, a wild and sudden shout of
“Land!”

Echoed from crew to crew across the waves.
Then, dumb upon the rigging as they hung
Staring at it, a menace chilled their blood.
For like *Il Gran Nemico* of Dante, dark,
Ay, coloured like a thunder-cloud, from North
To South, in front, there slowly rose to sight
A country like a dragon fast asleep
Along the West, with wrinkled, purple wings
Ending in ragged forests o’er its spine;
And with great craggy claws out-thrust, that
turned

(As the dim distances dissolved their veils)
To promontories bounding a huge bay.
There o’er the hushed and ever shallower tide
The staring ships drew nigh and thought,
“Is this

The Dragon of our Golden Apple Tree,
The guardian of the fruit of our desire

Which grows in gardens of the Hesperides
Where those three sisters weave a white-
armed dance

Around it everlastingly, and sing
Strange songs in a strange tongue that still
convey

Warning to heedful souls?" Nearer they
drew,

And now, indeed, from out a soft blue-grey
Mingling of colours on that coast's deep flank
There crept a garden of enchantment, height
O'er height, a garden sloping from the hills,
Wooded as with Aladdin's trees that bore
All-coloured clustering gems instead of fruit;
Now vaster as it grew upon their eyes,
And like some Roman amphitheatre
Cirque above mighty cirque all round the bay,
With jewels and flowers ablaze on women's
breasts

Innumerably confounded and confused;

While lovely faces flushed with lust of blood,
Rank above rank upon their tawny thrones
In soft barbaric splendour lapped, and lulled
By the low thunderings of a thousand lions,
Luxuriously smiled as they bent down
Over the scarlet-splashed and steaming sands
To watch the white-limbed gladiators die.

Such fears and dreams for Francis Drake,
at least,
Rose and dissolved in his nigh fevered brain
As they drew near that equatorial shore;
For rumours had been borne to him; and now
He knew not whether to impute the wrong
To his untrustful mind or to believe
Doughty a traitorous liar; for the sense
Of his own friendship towards him made it
hard
To understand that treachery; yet there
seemed

Proof and to spare. A thousand shadows rose
To mock him with their veiled indicative
hands.

And each alone he laid and exorcised
With ease; but ah, not all, not all at once.
And for each doubt he banished, one returned
From darker depths to mock him o'er again.

So, in that bay, the little fleet sank sail
And anchored; and the wild reality
Behind those dreams towered round them on
the hills,

Or so it seemed. And Drake bade lower a
boat,

And went ashore with sixteen men to seek
Water; and, as they neared the embowered
beach,

Over the green translucent tide there came,
A hundred yards from land, a drowsy sound
Immeasurably repeated and prolonged,

As of innumerable elfin drums
Dreamily mustering in the tropic bloom.
This from without they heard, across the
waves;

But when they glided into a flowery creek
Under the sharp black shadows of the trees—
Jaca and Mango and Palm and red festoons
Of garlanded Liana wreaths—it ebbd
Into the murmur of the mighty fronds,
Prodigious leaves whose veinings bore the
fresh

Impression of the finger-prints of God.
There humming-birds, like flakes of purple
fire

Upon some passing seraph's plumage, beat
And quivered in blinding blots of golden light
Between the embattled cactus and cardoon;
While one huge whisper of primeval awe
Seemed to await the cool green eventide
When God should walk His Garden as of old.

Now as the boats were plying to and fro
Between the ships and that enchanted shore,
Drake bade his comrades tarry a little and
went

Apart, alone, into the trackless woods.
Tormented with his thoughts, he saw all
round

Once more the battling image of his mind,
Where there was nought of man, only the vast
Unending silent struggle of Titan trees,
Large internecine twistings of the world,
The hushed death-grapple and the still intense
Locked anguish of Laocoons that gripped
Death by the throat for thrice three hundred
years.

Once, like a subtle mockery overhead,
Some black-armed chattering ape swung
swiftly by,
But he strode onward, thinking—"Was it
false,

False all that kind outreaching of the
hands?

False? Was there nothing certain, nothing
sure

In those divinest aisles and towers of Time
Wherein we took sweet counsel? Is there
nought

Sure but the solid dust beneath our feet?
Must all those lovelier fabrics of the soul,
Being so divinely bright and delicate,
Waver and shine no longer than some poor
Prismatic aery bubble? Ay, they burst,
And all their glory shrinks into one tear
No bitterer than some idle love-lorn maid
Sheds for her dead canary. God, it hurts,
This, this hurts most, to think how we must
miss

What might have been, for nothing but a
breath,

A babbling of the tongue, an argument,

Or such a poor contention as involves
The thrones and dominations of this earth,—
How many of us, like seed on barren ground,
Must miss the flower and harvest of their
prayers,

The living light of friendship and the grasp
Which for its very meaning once implied
Eternities of utterance and the life •
Immortal of two souls beyond the grave? ”

Now, wandering upward ever, he reached and
clomb

The slope side of a fern-fringed precipice,
And, at the summit, found an open glade,
Whence, looking o'er the forest, he beheld
The sea; and, in the land-locked bay below,
Far, far below, his elfin-tiny ships,
All six at anchor on the crawling tide!
Then onward, upward, through the woods
once more

He plunged with bursting heart and burning
brow ;

And, once again, like madness, the black
shapes

Of doubt swung through his brain and
chattered and laughed,

Till he upstretched his arms in agony
And cursed the name of Doughty, cursed the
day

They met, cursed his false face and courtier
smiles ;

“ For oh,” he cried, “ how easy a thing it were
For truth to wear the garb of truth ! This
proves

His treachery ! ” And there, at once, his
thoughts

Tore him another way, as thus, “ And yet
If he were false, is he not subtle enough
To hide it ? Why, this proves his inno-
cence—

This very courtly carelessness which I,
Black-hearted evil-thinker as I am,
In my own clumsier spirit so misjudge!
These children of the court are butterflies
Fluttering hither and thither, and I—poor
fool—

Would fix them to a stem and call them
flowers,

Nay, bid them grasp the ground like tower-
ing oaks

And shadow all the zenith;" and yet again
The madness of distrustful friendship gleamed
From his fierce eyes, "Oh villain, damnèd
villain,

God's murrain on his heart! I know full well
He hides what he can hide! He wears no
fault

Upon the gloss and frippery of his breast!
It is not that! It is the hidden things,
Unseizable, the things I do not know,

Ay, it is these, these, these and these alone
That I mistrust."

And, as he walked, the skies
Grew full of threats, and now enormous clouds
Rose mammoth-like above the ensanguined
deep, •

Trampling the daylight out; and, with its
death

Dyed purple, rushed along as if they meant
To obliterate the world. He took no heed.
Though that strange blackness brimmed the
branching aisles

With horror, he strode on till in the gloom,
Just as his winding way came out once more
Over a precipice that o'erlooked the bay,
There, as he went, not gazing down, but up,
He saw what seemed a ponderous granite cliff,
A huge ribbed shell upon a lonely shore
Left by forgotten mountains when they sank
Back to earth's breast like billows on a sea.

A tall and whispering crowd of tree-ferns
waved

Mysterious fringes round it. In their midst
He flung himself at its broad base, with one
Sharp shivering cry of pain, "Show me Thy
ways,

O God, teach me Thy paths! I am in the
dark!

Lighten my darkness!"

Almost as he spoke
There swept across the forest, far and wide,
Gathering power and volume as it came,
A sound as of a rushing mighty wind;
And, overhead, like great black gouts of blood
Wrung from the awful forehead of the Night
The first drops fell and ceased. Then, suddenly,

Out of the darkness, earth with all her seas,
Her little ships at anchor in the bay
(Five ebony ships upon a sheet of silver,

Drake saw not that, indeed, Drake saw not
that!),

Her woods, her boughs, her leaves, her
tiniest twigs, •

Leapt like a hunted stag through one im-
mense

Lightning of revelation into the murk
Of Erebus: then heaven o'er rending heaven
Shattered and crashed down ruin over the
world.

But, in that deeper darkness, Francis Drake
Stood upright now, and with blind out-
stretched arms

Groped at that strange forgotten cliff and shell
Of mystery; for in that flash of light
Æons had passed; and now the Thing in front
Made his blood freeze with memories that lay
Behind his Memory. In the gloom he groped,
And with dark hands that knew not what
they knew,

As one that shelters in the night, unknowing,
Beneath a stranded shipwreck, with a cry
He touched the enormous rain-washed belted
 ribs

And bones like battlements of some Mastodon
Embedded there until the trump of doom.

After long years, long centuries, perchance,
Triumphantly some other pioneer
Would stand where Drake now stood and
 read the tale

Of ages where he only felt the cold
Touch in the dark of some huge mystery;
Yet Drake might still be nearer to the light
Who now was whispering from his great
 deep heart,

“Show me Thy ways, O God, teach me
 Thy paths!”

And there by some strange instinct, oh, he felt
God's answer there, as if he grasped a hand

Across a gulf of twice ten thousand years;
And he regained his lost magnificence
Of faith in that great Harmony which re-
solves
Our discords, faith through all the ruthless
laws
Of nature in their lovely pitilessness,
Faith in that Love which outwardly must
wear,
Through all the sorrows of eternal change,
The splendour of the indifference of God.

All round him through the heavy purple
gloom
Sloped the soft rush of silver-arrowed rain,
Loosening the skjes' hard anguish as with
tears.
Once more he felt his unity with all
The vast composure of the universe,
And drank deep at the fountains of that peace

Which comprehends the tumult of our days.
But with that peace the power to act re-
turned;

And, with his back against the Mastodon,
He stared through the great darkness tow'rd
the sea.

The rain ceased for a moment: only the slow
Drip of the dim droop-feathered palms all
round

Deepened the hush.

Then, out of the gloom once more
The whole earth leapt to sight with all her
woods,

Her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs
distinct

For one wild moment; but Drake only saw
The white flash of her seas and there, oh
there

That land-locked bay with those five elfin ships,
Five elfin ebony ships upon a sheet

Of wrinkled silver! Then, as the thunder
followed,

One thought burst through his brain—

• *Where was the sixth?*

Over the grim precipitous edge he hung,
An eagle waiting for the lightning now
To swoop upon his prey. One iron hand
Gripped a rough tree-root like a bunch of
snakes;

And, as the rain rushed round him, far away
He saw to northward yet another flash,
A scribble of God's finger in the sky
Over a waste of white stampeding waves.
His eye flashed like a falchion as he saw it,
And from his lips there burst the sea-king's
laugh; •

For there, with a fierce joy he knew, he knew
Doughty, at last—an open mutineer!
An open foe to fight! Ay, there she went,—
His *Golden Hynde*, his little *Golden Hynde*

A wild deserter scudding to the North.
And, almost ere the lightning, Drake had gone
Crashing down the face of the precipice,
By a narrow water-gully, and through the huge
Forest he tore the straight and perilous way
Down to the shore; while, three miles to
the North,
Upon the wet poop of the *Golden Hynde*
Doughty stood smiling. Scarce would he
have smiled
Knowing that Drake had seen him from that
tower
Amidst the thunders; but, indeed, he thought
He had escaped unseen amidst the storm.
Many a day he had worked upon the crew,
Fanning their fears and doubts until he won
The more part to his side. And when they
reached
That coast, he showed them how Drake
meant to sail

Southward, into the unknown Void ; but he
Would have them suddenly slip by stealth
away

Northward to Darien, showing them what a
life

Of golden glory waited for them there,
If, laying aside this empty quest, they joined
The merry feasters round those island fires
Which over many a dark-blue creek illumed
Buccaneer camps in scarlet logwood groves,
Fringing the Gulf of Mexico, till dawn
Summoned the Black Flags out to sweep
the sea.

But when Drake reached the flower-em-
bowered boat,

And found the men awaiting his return
There, in a sheltering grove of bread-fruit
trees

Beneath great eaves of leafage that obscured

Their sight, but kept the storm out, as they
tossed

Pieces of eight or rattled the bone dice,
His voice went through them like a thunder-
bolt,

For none of them had seen the *Golden Hynde*
Steal from the bay; and now the billows
burst

Like cannon down the coast; and they had
thought

Their boat could not be launched until the
storm

Abated. Under Drake's compelling eyes,
Nevertheless, they poled her down the creek
Without one word, waiting their chance.

Then all

Together with their brandished oars they
thrust,

And on the fierce white out-draught of a
wave

They shot up, up and over the toppling crest
Of the next, and plunged crashing into the
vale

Behind it : then they settled at their thwarts,
And the fierce water boiled before their blades
As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,
They soared and crashed across the rolling
séas.

Not for the Spanish prize did Drake now
steer,

But for that little ship the *Marygold*,
Swiftest of sail, next to the *Golden Hynde*,
And, in the hands of Francis Drake, indeed
Swiftest of all ; and ere the seamen knew
What power, as of a wind, bore them along,
Anchor was up, their hands were on the
sheets,

The sails were broken out, the *Marygold*
Was flying like a storm-cloud to the North,

And on her poop an iron statue still
As death stood Francis Drake.

One hour they rushed
Northward, with green seas washing o'er the
deck

And buffeted with splendour; then they saw
The *Golden Hynde* like some wing-broken gull
With torn mismanaged plumes beating the air
In peril of utter shipwreck; saw her fly
Half-mast, a feeble signal of distress
Despite all Doughty's curses; for her crew
With wild divisions torn amongst themselves
Most gladly now surrendered in their hearts,
As close alongside grandly onward swept
The *Marygold*, with canvas trim and taut
Magnificently drawing the full wind,
Her gunners waiting at their loaded guns
Bare-armed and silent; and that iron soul
Alone, upon her silent quarter-deck.
There they hauled up into the wind and lay

Rocking, while Drake, alone, without a guard,
Boarding the runaway, dismissed his boat
Back to the *Marygold*. Then his voice out-
rang

Trumpet-like o'er the trembling mutineers,
And clearly, as if they were but busied still
About the day's routine. They hid their
sname,

As men that would propitiate a god,
By flying to fulfil his lightest word;
And ere they knew what power, as of a
wind

Impelled them—that half wreck was trim
and taut,

Her sails all drawing and her bows afoam;
And, creeping past the *Marygold* once more,
She led their Southward way! And not till
then

Did Drake vouchsafe one word to the white
face

Of Doughty, as he furtively slunk nigh
With some new lie upon his fear-parched
lips

Thirsting for utterance in his crackling laugh
Of deprecation; and with one ruffling puff
Of pigeon courage in his blinded soul—

“I am no sea-dog—even Francis Drake
Would scarce misuse a gentleman. Thank
God

I am a gentleman!” And there Drake
turned

And summoned four swart seamen out by
name.

His words went like a cold wind through
their flesh

As with a passionless voice he slowly said,
“Take ye this fellow: bind him to the mast
Until what time I shall decide his fate.”

And Doughty gasped as at the world's blank
end,—

“Nay, Francis,” cried he, “wilt thou thus
misuse

A gentleman?” But as the seamen gripped
His arms he struggled vainly and furiously
To throw them off; and in his impotence
Let slip the whole of his treacherous cause
and hope

In empty wrath,—“Fore God,” he foamed
and snarled,

“Ye shall all smart for this when we return!
Unhand me, dogs! I have Lord Burleigh’s
power

Behind me. There is nothing I have done
Without his warrant! Ye shall smart for this!
Unhand me, I say, unhand me!”

And in one flash
Drake saw the truth, and Doughty saw his
eyes

Lighten upon him; and his false heart
quailed

Once more; and he suddenly suffered himself
Quietly, strangely, to be led away
And bound without a murmur to the mast.
And strangely Drake remembered, as those
words,

"Ye shall all smart for this when we return,"
Yelped at his faith, how while the Dover cliffs
Faded from sight he leaned to his new friend
Doughty and said: "I blame them not who
stay!

I blame them not at all who cling to home,
For many of us, indeed, shall not return,
Nor ever know that sweetness any more."

And when they had reached their anchorage
anew,

Drake, having now resolved to bring his fleet
Beneath a more compact control, at once
Took all the men and the chief guns and
stores

From out the Spanish prize; and sent Tom
Moone

To set the hulk afire. Also he bade
Unbind the traitor and ordered him aboard
The pinnace *Christopher*. John Doughty, too,
He order'd thither, into the grim charge
Of old Tom Moone, thinking it best to keep
The poisonous leaven carefully apart
Until they had won well Southward, to a
place

Where, finally committed to their quest,
They might arraign the traitor without fear
Or favour, and acquit him or condemn.
But those two brothers, doubting as the
false

Are damned to doubt, saw murder in his
eyes,

And thought "He means to sink the smack
one night,"

And they refused to go, till Drake abruptly

Ordered them straightway to be slung on
board

With ropes.

The daylight waned; but ere the sun
Sank, the five ships were plunging to the
South;

For Drake would halt no longer, lest the
crews

Also should halt betwixt two purposes.

He took the tide of fortune at the flood;
And onward through the now subsiding
storm,

Ere they could think what power as of a
wind

Impelled them, he had swept them on their
way.

Far, far into the night they saw the blaze
That leapt in crimson o'er the abandoned hulk
Behind them, like a mighty hecatomb
Marking the path of some Titanic will.

Many a night and day they Southward drove.
Sometimes at midnight round them all the sea
Quivered with witches' oils and water snakes,
Green, blue, and red, with lambent tongues
of fire.

Mile upon mile about the blurred black hulls
A cauldron of tempestuous colour coiled.
On every mast mysterious meteors burned,
And from the shores a bellowing rose and fell
As of great bestial gods that walked all night
Through some wild hell unknown, too vast
for men ;

But when the silver and crimson of the dawn
Broke out, they saw the tropic shores anew,
The fair white foam, and, round about the
rocks,

Weird troops of tusked sea-lions; and the
world

Mixed with their dreams and made them
stranger still.

And, once, so fierce a tempest scattered the
fleet

That even the hardest souls began to think
There was a Jonah with them; for the seas
Rose round them like green mountains,
peaked and ridged

With heights of Alpine snow amongst the
clouds;

And many a league to Southward, when the
ships

Gathered again amidst the sinking waves
Four only met. The ship of Thomas Drake
Was missing; and some thought it had
gone down

With all hands in the storm. But Francis
Drake

Held on his way, learning from hour to hour
To merge himself in immortality;
Learning the secret of those pitiless laws
Which dwarf all mortal grief, all human pain,

To something less than nothing by the side
Of that eternal travail dimly guessed,
Since first he felt in the miraculous dark
The great bones of the Mastodon, that hulk
Of immemorial death. He learned to judge
The passing pageant of this outward world
As by the touch-stone of that memory;
Even ^{as} in that country which some said
Lay now not far, the great Tezcucan king,
Resting his jewelled hand upon a skull,
And on a smouldering glory of jewels throned
There in his temple of the Unknown God
Over the host of Aztec princes, clad
In golden hauberks gleaming under soft
Surcoats of green or scarlet feather-work,
Could in the presence of a mightier power
Than life or death give up his guilty sons,
His only sons, to the sacrificial sword.
And hour by hour the soul of Francis Drake,
Unconscious as an oak-tree of its growth,

Increased in strength and stature as he drew
Earth, heaven, and hell within him, more
and more.

For as the dream we call 'our world, with all
Its hues is but a picture in the brain,
So did his soul enfold the universe
With gradual sense of superhuman power,
While every visible shape within the vast
Horizon seemed the symbol of some thought
Waiting for utterance. He had found indeed
God's own Nirvana, not of empty dream
But of intensest life! Nor did he think
Aught of all this; but, as the rustic deems
The colours that he carries in his brain
Are somehow all outside him while he peers
Unaltered through two windows in his face,
Drake only knew that as the four ships
plunged
Southward, the world mysteriously grew
More like a prophet's vision, hour by hour,

Fraught with dark omens and significances,
A world of hieroglyphs and sacred signs
Wherein he seemed to read the truth that lay
Hid from the Roman augurs when of old
They told the future from the flight of birds.
How vivid with disaster seemed the flight
Of those blood-red flamingoes o'er the dim
Blue steaming forest, like two terrible thoughts
Flashing, unapprehended, through his brain!

And now, as they drove Southward, day and
 night,
Through storm and calm, the shores that
 fleeted by

Grew wilder, grander, with his growing soul,
And pregnant with the approaching mystery.
And now along the Patagonian coast
They cruised, and in the solemn midnight
 saw

Wildernesses of shaggy barren marl,

Petrified seas of lava, league on league,
Craters and bouldered slopes and granite
cliffs

With ragged rents, grim gorges, deep ravines,
And precipice on precipice up-piled
Innumerable to those dim distances
Where, over valleys hanging in the clouds,
Gigantic mountains and volcanic peaks
Catching the wefts of cirrus fleece appeared
To smoke against the sky, though all was
now

Dead as that frozen chaos of the moon,
Or some huge passion of a slaughtered soul
Prostrate under the marching of the stars.

At last, and in a silver dawn, they came
Suddenly on a broad-winged estuary,
And, in the midst of it, an island lay.
There they found shelter, on its leeward side,
And Drake convened upon the *Golden Hynde*

His dread court-martial. Two long hours
he heard

Defence and accusation, then broke up
The conclave, and, with burning heart and
brain, .

Feverishly seeking everywhere some sign
To guide him, went ashore upon that isle,
And lo, turning a rugged point of rock,
He rubbed his eyes to find out if he
dreamed,

For there—a Crusoe's wonder, a miracle,
A sign—before him stood on that lone strand
Stark, with a stern arm pointing out his way
And jangling still one withered skeleton,
The grim black gallows where Magellan
hanged .

His mutineers. Its base was white with bones
Picked by the gulls, and crumbling o'er the
sand

A dread sea-salt, dry from the tides of time.

There, on that lonely shore, Death's finger-
post

Stood like some old forgotten truth made
strange

By the long lapse of many memories,

All starting up in resurrection now

As at the trump of doom, heroic ghosts

Out of the cells and graves of his deep brain

Reproaching him. "*Were this man not thy
friend,*

Ere now he should have died the traitor's death.

What wilt thou say to the others if they, too,

Prove false? Or wilt thou slay the lesser and save

The greater sinner? Nay, if thy right hand

Offend thee, cut it off!" And, in one flash,

Drake saw his path and chose it.

With a voice

Low as the passionless anguished voice of
Fate

That comprehends all pain, but girds it round

With iron, lest some random cry break out
For man's misguidance, he drew all his men
Around him, saying, "Ye all know how I
loved

Doughty, who hath betrayed me twice and
thrice,

For I still trusted him: he was no felon
That I should turn my heart away from him!
He is the type and image of man's laws;
While I—am lawless as the soul that still
Must sail and seek a world beyond the worlds,
A law behind earth's laws. I dare not judge!
But ye—who know the mighty goal we seek,
Who have seen him sap our courage, hour
by hour,

Till God Himself almost appeared a dream
Behind his technicalities and doubts
Of aught he could not touch or handle; ye
Who have seen him stir up jealousy and strife
Between our seamen and our gentlemen,

Even as the world stirs up continual strife,
Bidding the man forget he is a man
With God's own patent of nobility;
Ye who have seen him strike this last sharp
blow—

Sharper than any enemy hath struck,—
Ay, Jonathan, mine own familiar friend,
He whom I trusted, he alone could strike
So sharply, for indeed I loved this man.
Judge ye—for see, I cannot. Do not doubt
I loved this man!

But now, if ye will let him have his life,
Oh, speak! But, if ye think it must be
death,

Hold up your hands in silence!" His voice
dropped,

And eagerly he whispered forth one word
Beyond the scope of Fate—"Yet, oh, my
friends,

I would not have him die!" There was no
sound

Save the long thunder of eternal seas,—
Drake bowed his head and prayed.

Then, suddenly,
One man upheld his hand; and, all at once,
A brawny forest of brown arms arose
In silence, and the great sea whispered *Death*.

.
There, with one big swift impulse, Francis
Drake

Held out his right sun-blackened hand and
gripped

The hand that Doughty proffered him; and lo,
Doughty laughed out and said, "Since I
must die,

Let us have one more hour of comradeship,
One hour as old companions. Let us make
A feast here, on this island, ere I go
Where there is no more feasting." So they
made

A great and solemn banquet as the day
Decreased; and Doughty bade them all unlock

Their sea-chests and bring out their rich
array.

There, by that wondering ocean of the West,
In crimson doublets, lined and slashed with
gold,

In brodered lace and double golden chains
Embossed with rubies and great cloudy pearls
They feasted, gentleman adventurers,
Drinking old malmsey, as the sun sank down.

Now Doughty, fronting the rich death of day,
And flourishing a silver pouncet-box
With many a courtly jest and rare conceit,
There as he sat in rich attire, out-braved
The rest. Though darker-hued, yet richer far,
His murrey-coloured doublet, double-piled
Of Genoa velvet, puffed with ciprus, shone;
For over its grave hues the gems that bossed
His golden collar, wondrously relieved,
Blazed lustrous to the West like stars. But
Drake

Wore simple black, with midnight silver
 slashed,

And, at his side, a great two-handed sword.

At last they rose, just as the sun's last rays

Rested upon the heaving molten gold

Immeasurable. The long slow sigh of the
 waves

That creamed across the lonely time-worn reef

All round the island seemed the very voice

Of the Everlasting: black against the sea

The gallows of Magellan stretched its arm

With that gaunt skeleton and its rusty chain

Creaking and swinging in the solemn breath

Of eventide like some strange pendulum

Measuring out the moments that remained.

There did they take the holy sacrament

Of Jesus' body and blood. Then Doughty
 and Drake

Kissed each other, as brothers, on the cheek;

And Doughty knelt. And Drake, without one
 word,

Leaning upon the two-edged naked sword
Stood at his side, with iron lips, and eyes
Full of the sunset; while the doomed man
bowed

His head upon a rock. The great sun
dropped

Suddenly, and the land and sea were dark;
And as it were a sign, Drake lifted up
The gleaming sword. It seemed to sweep
the heavens

Down in its arc as he smote, once, and no
more.

Then, for a moment, silence froze their veins,
Till one fierce seaman stooped with a hoarse
cry;

And, like an eagle clutching up its prey,
His arm swooped down and bore the head
aloft,

Gorily streaming, by the long dark hair;
And a great shout went up, "So perish all

Traitors to God and England." Then Drake
turned

And bade them to their ships ; and, wondering,
They left him. As the boats thrust out from
shore

Brave old Tom Moone looked back with faith-
ful eyes

Like a great mastiff to his master's face.

He, looming larger from his loftier ground

Clad with the slowly gathering night of stars

And gazing sea-ward o'er his quiet dead,

Seemed like some Titan bronze in grandeur
based

Unshakeable until the crash of doom

Shattered the black foundations of the world.

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THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN.

By ALFRED NOYES.

PRESS OPINIONS.

The Times.—Mr Noyes so charges it with fascination and terror and kaleidoscopic colour, that most readers, we dare to promise, will take its ninety pages at a sitting and turn back to read again. We said just now that he has a fine eye for colour, and will quote a couple of stanzas in proof.....But, indeed, quotation does injustice to a poem which owes its effectiveness to the piling up of picture upon picture with such rapidity that the reader might imagine himself jingling in a palanquin down the long avenue of an Eastern bazaar heaped with silks, tea-chests, trays of jewels, vases, fans, sun-shades, carved ivories, and lacquered arms, and thronged with merchants, seamen, bonzes, pirates, apes, macaws, and mandarins. And through all, as befits the story of a childish dream, there runs an exquisite sense of terror. Also the dream manages to keep throughout the inconsecutiveness proper to dreams—and yet has an artistic unityfilled with magic and beauty.

The Spectator.—It is much easier to imagine than to put into words what Mr Noyes means by his 'Flower of Old Japan.' Some of us, perhaps, can remember how we built romances out of the oddities of a "willow-pattern" plate. If so, we shall be able to understand Mr Noyes.....[Quotation.].....The fact is, that the charm of the verse eludes us when we try to describe it. We feel it; but we cannot exactly say why, or define it in any intelligible way. Shall we say that it reminds us of 'Alice in Wonderland'? It does after a fashion, though it is not in the least an imitation; and it differs, too, in having a certain seriousness in its phantasy.

THE LOOM OF YEARS.

BY ALFRED NOYES.

PRESS OPINIONS.

The Times (in a review of a column and a half).—Extraordinary promise.His singing puts one in mind of the lads commemorated in Stevenson's *alcads* :—

“ Brave lads in olden musical centuries
Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,
Sat late by alehouse doors in April
Chanting in joy as the moon was rising ”

The Standard.—Mr Noyes is something of a symbolist and something of a mystic. Several of his poems breathe that strange yearning for the Infinite and the elusive, that

“ Desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,”

which is perceptible in so much that is most interesting in the contemporary poetry of England and France. It is characteristic of the whole school that, like their exemplar, Shelley, they are studiously and deliberately vague. Sometimes they are apt to become so esoteric that only the initiated can understand them. This, however, is not the case with Mr Noyes, whose style is lucid and simple.

The Speaker.—To read it is to pass with delight from one beauty to another to the very end of the volume. No ill-wrought line, no overstrained expression, no lapse of melody, offends the eye and ear, for Mr Noyes, of whom we know nothing beyond this book, is a sure and cunning workman, with a fine technical command of his material. [Quotation.]That has a magical charm ; fine thought is wedded to a haunting rhythm, and the music vibrates and vibrates away, and is caught and repeated, and fades and swells as the hand of a poet touches the strings.....Mr Noyes is a poet. No other word is adequate.

George Meredith.—“ Michael Oaktree ” is worthy of praise, not only as a performance, but also as an intimation of strength coming.



